

A call for 911

Among the advantages of living in the modern world are the wonderful things that technology can do for us. We only have to learn to accept them.

One that we should accept as soon as we can is a state-wide 911 emergency telephone number.

The technology of computer-based telecommunications now makes it possible to dial that one number anywhere in the state and be instantly in touch with local life-squad, police and fire dispatchers.

Senators Richard Finan and Stanley Aronoff, both Cincinnati Republicans, are proposing such a state-wide system in a measure to be introduced next week. It calls for the state to pay for installation of the system, for local governments to pay for staffing, and for subscribers to pay between 12 and 25 cents a month.

Even if the state weren't going to pick up the installation charges, it would be a fine idea whose time had come.

Page 2 of the Cincinnati telephone directory lists well over

100 municipalities with their own arrangements for reporting fires or calling police. Sorting through the columns of numbers for just the right one isn't easy even sitting in a quiet office. The fact that many places already share the same number doesn't change the difficulty created by those columns of figures.

Until the 911 system became possible, the universal number for help was "0" for the operator, and that still works even though AT&T answers the call now, not a Cincinnati Bell operator. But why not remove one more fallible human being from between the needy and the needed?

As a fringe benefit, the proposed system would automatically provide the location of the caller to emergency personnel.

The 911 system would provide an easily remembered way to get instant help in an emergency, and the price is right. The General Assembly should adopt the Finan-Aronoff bill, and it should be implemented in Hamilton County as soon as possible.